

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

(Continued from last week.)

The General Assembly resumed on Tuesday morning when the report of the Hymnal Committee was presented by Rev. Dr. Gregg.

A summary is as follows:—



REV. WM. GREGG, D.D.

The Hymnal Committee commence their report this year by referring to the great loss they have sustained in the removal, by death, of one of their members, the Rev. D. J. Macdonnell, B.D. Ever since the Committee was organized eighteen years ago he rendered invaluable service. In the selection of hymns and as Chairman of the Music Committee he was judicious and indefatigable in his labors. During the last few years he took special delight in efforts made to secure a Common Hymnal for all

the Presbyterian Churches in the British Empire. For this purpose, at great personal sacrifice, he went to Scotland to confer with the Joint Committee there. They, on hearing the sad tidings of his death, adopted and transmitted the copy of a resolution expressing deep sympathy with us, and bearing testimony to his energetic and loyal co-operation in helping to prepare a Common Hymnal. Copies of this resolution and also of a similar resolution, adopted by the Committee here, were sent to his bereaved family, and were gratefully acknowledged. . . . Finding the differences to be great, the Committee did not see its way to recommend the adoption of the Draft Common Hymnal, as recently revised; and, as they were instructed by the Assembly to report this year for final action, they proceeded to re-examine and re-model their own Draft in the light of the reports previously received from Presbyteries, and from the, in many respects, valuable collection of the Committee in Scotland. The result was that they agreed to recommend the omission of a large number of less needful hymns from their own Draft and the substitution of what they considered a better class from the Draft Common Hymnal. There are about 400 hymns common to the two Drafts as most recently revised, and about 200 in each not in the other. The differences arise chiefly from the great extent to which what are usually called evangelistic hymns are excluded from the Scotch Draft, and from its entire exclusion of selections from the Paraphrases, both of which classes are included in the Canadian Draft. Although the Committee felt constrained to differ so widely as has been intimated from the brethren in Scotland, they, nevertheless, felt bound to acknowledge, with gratitude, the great benefits they have derived from their intercourse and correspondence with them. They are persuaded that the Canadian Draft, as most recently revised, has been greatly improved by changes made to a large extent in accordance with their views, as embodied in their Draft Common Hymnal.

Of the subjects in the hymns in the newly revised Canadian Hymnal a copious index has been prepared by a sub-committee appointed for the purpose.

Concurrent with the revision of hymns by the General Committee, great labor and pains were devoted by the Sub-Committee on Music to the selection of tunes. They report as the result of their work, that tunes have been selected and repeatedly revised for all the hymns in the Canadian Draft Hymnal, and that the following principles have guided them in making their selections:

1. All such tunes in the present Hymnal as have been found to be really acceptable and useful in the services of the Church, have been retained, while such as have failed in usefulness the Committee endeavored to set aside in favor of others more suitable.

2. The Committee have also endeavored to maintain in the music that dignity befitting the sacred service, and a worthy musical standard, together with that melodious quality so necessary to the usefulness of a tune.

3. Frequently it has been deemed advisable to set two tunes to one hymn, and where this has been done, one is perhaps greater in musical quality, while the second is frequently as simple and melodious as possible.

4. On the other hand, one tune has again and again been found to be sufficient for two hymns.

5. Two hymns of like sentiment and metre have been frequently placed upon opposite pages. Thus any one of the two or three tunes upon these pages may be used with either hymn.

6. In order to avoid frequent reprinting of tunes, and at the same time to indicate other suitable tunes to choirs and congregations, footnotes directing attention to other tunes are frequently employed.

The Sub-Committee have sent to the Joint Committee in Scotland its suggestions for over four hundred tunes in the Common Hymnal.

After the protracted and careful consideration given by them to the preparation of a Hymnal for use in our Church, the Committee now cherish the hope that their recently revised Draft may be regarded with General approval by the Assembly. At the date when this report is prepared they do not know what reception the Joint Committee's Draft Common Hymnal may meet with in Scotland.

Notwithstanding the very general and pressing demand of our people for the publication of a New Book of Praise, it was decided at last Assembly to defer action in this direction until efforts had been made to secure a Common Hymnal. On this account the consideration of other matters submitted by the Committee in last year's report was postponed. To these they now recall the attention of the Assembly. They desire especially to recall attention to the following statement and recommendation contained in the report of 1895, with respect to selections from metrical versions of the Book of Psalms:—

"From the returns received and considered by the Committee, it appeared that the resolution adopted by last Assembly, in favor of incorporating in the New Hymnal selections from the Common Metrical and other Versions of the Psalms, was acquiesced in by a large majority of Presbyteries. The incorporation of Selections was favored by fifteen and opposed by five Presbyteries. Of Presbyteries whose reports were received after the meeting in March, there were seven in favor of, and four opposite, the incorporation of Selections. Suggestions were made by most of the Presbyteries of additions to the selections reported last year, and the Committee agreed to make some additions. The Committee agreed to recommend the incorporation of the additions along with the selections reported last year."

Discussion on the report continued until 11 a.m., when the resolution on the

Manitoba School Question

was moved by Rev. Principal Caven.

In supporting his resolution he said there were members of the Assembly who had grave doubts as to the propriety of bringing in such a subject at such a time. He could not, however, conclude that it was not a proper thing for the Assembly to express its mind on the great religious and educational questions. He would not commit any member on a State-Church question, but there was nothing in the resolution which could be construed as being of that character. They all agreed that the State should not expend its funds in favor of sectarian interests or teaching. (Applause.) The Church had its own province and State, and should work and pay for it just as the State had its own province and work, and was bound to support it. It had been stated in the press that his (the speaker's) mouth, and that of the Assembly, were closed because the Church was accepting public funds for conducting Indian schools in the North-West. The case in its most important aspects, was obviously a different one. If anyone could show that the Church in its agreement with the Government on the Indian question had violated the principle of not using public monies for sectarian purposes, he would be the first to move, in Assembly, that the agreement come to an end. (Applause.) He was astonished that any Protestant who had given the slightest attention to the school question in Quebec could regard it as parallel with that of Manitoba. The schools of the majority in Quebec, from beginning to end, were Roman schools, teaching the dogmas of that Church, and, sometimes, in a manner offensive to Protestants. If the people of Ontario or Manitoba should set up a system of schools as distinctly Protestant as the Quebec schools were Roman Catholic, the Assembly, to a man, would vote for Separate schools. (Applause.) He might be accused of dragging the Church into a political sphere. It was not the Church invading the rights of the province. It was the province invading the rights of the Church, and he refused to be warned out of the grounds simply because politicians pre-empted. (Applause.) It was being said throughout the country that the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council had stated that the minority in Manitoba had a grievance, also that a compact was really entered into between the Dominion and the Province of Manitoba regarding the matter of Separate schools. Hence it was argued that it was distinctly immoral for the Government or people not to grant to the minority their rights. He supposed they all knew that the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council had not said that Separate schools must be restored. What had been decided was that the Act of 1890 repealed the Act of 1871, and changed and altered the status of Roman Catholics in regard to educational matters. (Laughter and applause.) Thus they claimed a grievance. There certainly was a technical grievance. It was a shameful thing to say that the Privy Council had